DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 072 477 CS 500 124

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TITLE Family Type Influences on Child Television Viewing.
PUB DATE Dec 72
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Assn. (58th, Chicago, December 27-30, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Attitudes; Behavior Patterns; *Family Influence; Family Relationship; *Interpersonal Relationship; Orientation; *Parent Child Relationship; Perception; Social Values; *Television Viewing

ABSTRACT

The television viewing behaviors (program preferences) of children as influenced by family-type were examined in this study. To determine family-types, a four-fold typology of family interaction patterns (based on the degree of socio-interpersonal orientation and the degree of concept-idea orientation of the family) was used. Six hundred and fifty-four mother-child pairs were surveyed. The children were asked to rank six categories of television programs under three preference headings. The mothers completed two such rankings. From the rankings of program categories, three rank-order correlation coefficients were computed and cross tabulated with family types. The degree of similarity between child-mother programming preferences were found to be different among the four family types. In general however, most of the findings related mainly to differences between high-low socio-oriented and high-low concept-oriented families. (Author/LG)

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Family Type Influences on Child Television Viewing

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Presented to the Speech Communication Association
Debut Program: Mass Communication and Society
Chicago, Illinois
December, 1972

CS 500 124

Introduction

Evidence on the importance of the family in the socialization of the child continues to come in (e.g., Looft, 1970 and Banks, 1971), but it cannot be denied that other institutions in society, such as the educational system and the mass media, especially television, are also important socializing agents. It has been demonstrated on several occasions that television can be a significant influence in the socialization process (e.g., Himmelweit, et. al., 1958 and Schramm, et. al., 1961). It is also generally accepted (e.g., Klapper, 1960) that the influence of the mass media must filter through a variety of sociological mechanisms, such as the family, in the case of children. Given these working assumptions (the influence of the family, the influence of the media, and the importance of the family for media effects), the purpose of this study is to observe how family interaction patterns influence child-parent television viewing relationships.

Family influences on children are not equal; that is to say that families differ on several dimensions such as permissiveness, warmth, love and several other child rearing practices. In essence, different types of families emphasize different practices and de-emphasize others.

There have been several attempts at categorizing families into different types based upon their child rearing practices. The one selected for use in this study was chosen because: (1) it was developed out of previous communication research dealing with adolescent and parent use of mass media and various other studies about child-parent consumption of specialized mass communicated messages; and (2) it tries to measure the more interactive components of child-parent interpersonal communication in the family. In other words, the present family typing scheme does not necessarily see the parents as solely influencing the child, but the child as also a major influence on the parents. Some of these interactive components, when operationalized in the typing scheme, are manifested as behaviors in which the parents engage with the children. The behaviors deal with interpersonal relations or concept-idea relations in the family setting.

The typing or categorizing scheme utilized in the present study focuses primarily on mass media usage; therefore, the scheme is one of the most useful in determining what influences the family has on child viewing behavior. In practice there are several influences on actual television viewing behavior of children, but the present research seeks only to examine the relative influence of particular family types. In question form, the problem is: What is the relative importance of family type on the television viewing behavior of children? Television viewing behavior of children is an important variable to study because it too contributes to the total socializing process of children. If different types of families encourage different viewing behaviors in children, it may be possible to assess the combination of these two important variables (television viewing and family type) as major influences on children.

The major objective of the present research is to examine the relationships between family types, child viewing preferences, the child's perception of what his parents would like him to watch, the child's perception of what his mother would prefer to watch, the mother's television viewing preferences and her perception of what she would prefer her child to watch. More specifically, the research is aimed at the influence of family type on the relationship of television program preference of children, their perception of what their parents would like them to prefer and viewing preferences of mothers.

There are additional subsidiary, yet related, questions which enter into and influence the relationship between family type and child viewing behavior. These questions are: (1) how important or salient is the medium of television in the home?, and (2) does the educational achievement of the parents influence either the family types or the viewing relationships? The present research will index the first question--the importance of television in the home--but it will seek to control this variable in the sense that the primary focus is to study only those families where television is regarded as being of more than passing importance. Educational achievement of the parents will be indexed and separate data analyses may then be completed to control for this variable.

In summary, the dependent variables of the research will be expressed in terms of relationships between: (1) actual preferences of children and their perception of what their parents would prefer them to watch; (2) the child's perception of what his mother will prefer to watch and his mother's actual viewing preferences; and (3) the child's actual preferences and the mother's perception of what she believes her child should watch. The independent variable is family type. The method utilized is a field survey.

Rationale

Various writers have attempted to describe and classify interpersonal psychological climates or aspects of the home. Such classifications usually consist of descriptions of the parental role in dealing with children. Among the systems proposed have been those of democratic versus authoritarian by Baldwin (1955), Landis and Stone (1952), Levinson and Huffman (1955), Drews and Teahan (1957); of permissiveness-strictness by Sears, Maccoby and Levin (1957); of love-hostility versus control-autonomy by Schaefer (1961); of traditional-developmental by Blood (1953), Connor, Johannis and Walters (1954), Duvall (1946), and Elder (1949); of discipline versus authority by Radke (1946); instrument (task-oriented) versus expressive (social-emotional oriented) by Parsons and Bales (1952); warm-cold and possessive-detached by Baldwin (1955); and dominant possessive-ignoring by Shoben (1949). Still others, like Bronfenbrenner (1961), have tried to move to a more general perspective of parent-child relationships by looking at them in very gross, social contexts.

As Chaffee, McLeod and Wackman (1970) note, "...most theoretical literature on family structure conceives of a single authoritarian-permissive power continuum, with two contrasting types of families at the poles." A major problem with these types of categorizing systems for families is that they often are directed at mother-father interaction rather than examining the entire dynamics of parent-child interaction. The advantage of the family typology utilized in the present research is that it goes beyond parent behavior and gets at the complex interaction between parent and child.

McLeod, Chaffee and Eswara (1966) were among the first to emphasize the importance of family communication patterns and typologies in communication research. They initially wanted to study personality by looking at its operation and development in the socialization process. They looked upon the child's various sets of interactions in the family as constituting his personality. His family interaction patterns, they assumed, will form his "communication style." They constructed several attitudinal items pertaining to such things as: (1) the degree to which families emphasize harmony in interpersonal relations; (2) the degree to which families are organized in a hierarchical rather than equalitarian basis in interpersonal communications; (3) the degree to which families expose their children to controversial material; and (4) the degree to which families encourage the expression of the child's ideas. Their final questionnaire was administered to 200 parents of ninth graders and eventually a similar questionnaire was completed by the children. The correlations between items for the two groups were factor analyzed and two general factors were specified: socio-oriented and idea or concept-oriented families. The socio-oriented factor is one pertaining primarily to parent-child relations and in these families the children are taught to avoid disturbances in these relations. In the socio-oriented dimension one can expect a family to place rather restrictive limitations on the expression of anger and a hierarchical arrangement will exist with respect to the initiation and resolution of communication. The child will primarily be taught to avoid disturbances in parent-child relations even at the expense of the child's giving up his own viewpoint.

The idea-oriented factor pertains primarily to child-idea relations and is characterized by families in which the child may express his ideas more freely and he is exposed to contrasting sets of ideas. In terms of specific behaviors, the parents might encourage the expression of the child's ideas on several subjects, the parent might role play the opposite side in an argument and the children would more likely be exposed to alternative viewpoints in the discussion of controversial matters.

From these two factors, McLeod, et. al. (1966) then constructed a four-fold typology of family communication patterns by dichotomizing each of the two dimensions. Each group studied (parents and children) was divided in the median as diagrammed in Figure 1.

	Low Socio	High Socio
Low Idea	Laissez faire	Protective
High Idea	Pluralistic	Consensual

FIGURE 1. FOURFOLD FAMILY TYPOLOGY (from McLeod, et. al., 1966)

The four types and their definitions (from Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin, 1971 and McLeod, Chaffee and Eswara, 1966) are listed below:

Laissez faire families emphasize neither type of relation. Children are not prohibited from challenging parental views but neither are they exposed to the world of independent and contending ideas.

Protective families stress sociorelations only. The child is encouraged to get along with others, at the expense of concept-relations that would expose him to the controversial world of ideas. Not only is he prohibited from expressing dissent, but he is given little chance to encounter information on which he might base his own views.

Pluralistic families emphasize the development of strong and varied concept-relations in an environment comparatively free of social restraints. The child is encouraged to explore new ideas and is exposed to controversial material; he can make up his own mind without fear of endangering social relations with his parents.

Consensual families attempt to stress both orientations. While the child is exposed to controversy, and told he should enter into it, he is paradoxically constrained to develop concepts that are consonant with existing sociorelations. That is, he is in effect encouraged to learn his parents' ideas and adopt their values.

In terms of television viewing behavior of children it might be instructive to describe the McLeod, et. al. theory by presenting an alternative and highly analogous theoretical framework which relates to social influence and conformity. Kelman (1958 and 1961) describes three different processes of social influence as an individual adopts an induced behavior. The three processes are compliance, identification and internalization.

In the first process, that of compliance, the individual accepts influence from others because he hopes to achieve a favorable reaction from the person or group. He may perform the induced behavior not because he believes in its content but because he desires to gain specific rewards or to avoid punishments or disapproval. Kelman suggests that the person adopts the induced behavior because of his concern for the social effect, because of the high "means control" of the influencing agent, because of the severe limitations placed on the choice of behavior and because of the surveillance by the influencing agent. The process of compliance is most closely aligned with the socio-oriented dimension of the McLeod, et. al. theory and specifically related to the protective type of family. In the protective family the child may adopt the behavior not because he believes it but because he wishes to avoid disturbing the interpersonal climate or balance or because he wishes to gain approval from his parents. In terms of communication behavior, the child will more than likely adopt the parental choice so as not to disrupt those relations and to maintain harmony.

The second process outlined by Kelman is that of identification. This process of social influence may occur when the individual accepts influence from a person or group because he wishes to maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship to that person or group. Kelman suggests that the individual actually believes in his behavioral responses which he has adopted through identification, but their specific content is more or less irrelevant to him. He adopts the induced behavior because it is associated with a desirable relationship. His satisfaction derived from identification is due to his act of conforming as such. Some of the variables involved in identification might be the degree of attractiveness to the influencing agent, the delineation of roles and the salience of the relationship with the agent. The process of identification is most closely associated with the consensual family. In this family the child may be exposed to contrasting sets of ideas, but he is nevertheless expected to identify with the parental value system and ideas. He accepts their influence because he is expected to identify with the parental views and attitudes.

The third and final process of social influence which Kelman defines is internalization. This process, according to Kelman, will occur when the individual accepts influence because of the content of the induced behavior. The ideas of which it is composed are intrinsically rewarding. The behavior is congruent with his own value system. The satisfaction the individual derives from the process of internalization is due to the content of the ideas or behavior and it can be integrated with the individual's existing values. Some variables which Kelman believes are salient in internalization are the individual's concern with the value congruence of the behavior, the relevance of his values to the issue and the credibility of the source. The process of internalization is seemingly analogous to the pluralistic family. In this family the child is relatively free to seek out information to form his own ideas or values without fear of disrupting interpersonal

relations. In terms of television viewing behavior one might expect the child to view several programs which his parents would not, thus he would be exposing himself to different information as a means of constructing his value system. He most likely would not be aware of his parent's desires for him to seek out specific information because they would encourage his seeking out of different information.

The laissez faire family is the one cell of the McLeod, et. al. theory which does not conveniently fit into the Kelman framework. This is due to the fact that the laissez faire family is not closely aligned with either the socio or idea-oriented dimension of the family typology.

Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1971) utilized the fourfold family typology approach to family media use, particularly parental influences on adolescent use of the media. These authors found that the media use patterns of the adolescents and their parents were highly related, particularly when their analysis was directed at families within one dimension (either idea or socio-oriented). In addition, they found modeling to be strongest in those families with a socio orientation--the protectives and consensuals. Modeling is operationally defined in the Chaffee, et. al. study in terms of a positive and significant correlation coefficient between parent and child media use.

It should be noted here that Chaffee, et. al. should not have expected high correlations between parent and child media use, particularly in older adolescents. Their data indicated the media use "modeling" correlations to be higher among the younger adolescents (in this case, junior high) and their parents than the older (senior high) adolescents. Horrocks (1969) has suggested that as the adolescent gets older there is a strain toward emancipation from the parents and greater identification with the peer group. Conversely, the younger the child the more modeling one would expect (except, of course, where the infant is pre-verbal); the Chaffee, et. al. data are congruent with such an interpretation.

There were also differences in the type of media use in which one might expect modeling to be more prevalent. From the Chaffee, et. al. (1971) data it is apparent that more modeling of parental media usage occurred for entertainment and news programming than for news reading. This occurance was most sharply demonstrated in the protective and consensual families, although it was also true of the younger children from the laissez faire families. The only family communication pattern for which it did not hold true was the pluralistic family.

To summarize the Chaffee, et. al. theoretic framework, it appears that the forces of co-orientation between parents, child and television are strongest in those families best characterized as being high on the socio dimension (protectives and consensuals), and weakest in those families best characterized as being low on the socio dimension (pluralistic and laissez faire).

Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1971) review most of the relevant literature indicating that there are direct parental influences on media use. The correlation between parental and child media use has been found to be positive in a number of studies (Himmelweit, et. al., 1958; Schramm, et. al., 1961). Most of these correlations are assumed to be manifestations of some kind of modeling of parental viewing behavior, or as Schramm notes, "example is the best persuader."

If the type-of-family categories developed by Chaffee-McLeod are to be useful, then correlates or consequences of these categories must be established. What are the consequences of strong (e.g., as in "protective" families) or weak (e.g., as in "pluralistic" families) co-orientation forces? In this study, the dependent variables (the term "correlate variables" may be preferred, since an experimental design is not employed) are in the area of preferences in TV programming. If the Chaffee-McLeod method of categorizing family types does differentiate various degrees of co-orientation pressures, it is reasoned that these distinctions should be reflected in varying amounts of parent-child agreement in TV programming preferences. The operational form of all variables (both independent and dependent) will be described later; however, the theoretic independent variables are drawn from the Chaffee-McLeod categories of family types and the dependent (or correlate) variables are based on parent-child agreement (actual and perceived) in TV programming preferences.

Theoretic Hypotheses

H_1: The correlation of television viewing preferences of children and their perception of what their parents would prefer them to watch will be higher in the high socio-oriented families than in the low socio-oriented families.

It is interesting to note that the protective family imposes a communication restriction on the child. The child, in relation to children from other family types, has less of an opportunity to encounter information at variance with his parents' views. In this family, therefore, we should expect the most modeling to occur and the correlation between perceived preferences of the child's parents and his preference should be very high because he does not have the effect of added communication input. The child, because he does not want to upset the interpersonal climate, will also be more similar to his perception of his parental desires.

On the other hand, the child of the consensual family, according to the theory, will more likely be exposed to different mass communication input, but he is encouraged to adopt the parental model. Therefore, within the high socio-oriented families one might hypothesize the following:

H_2: There will be a higher correlation between child preferences and child perception of what his parents would prefer him to watch in the protective homes than in the consensual families.

Within the low socio-oriented families one might expect the following results to obtain:

H_3: There will be a higher correlation between child preference and child perception of what his parents would prefer him to watch in the laissez faire families than in the pluralistic families.

Nwanko (1970), utilizing the family communication patterns as outlined by McLeod, et. al. (1966), found that adolescents from pluralistic homes had more accurate perception of their parents' actual views and attitudes. Abel (1970) found that children (10 and 11 year olds) consistently were better able to predict

what their mothers' television viewing preferences were than could the mother predict the child's preferences. On reexamination of Abel's data, one notes that between entire categories of mothers and children 33 of the 40 children could better predict their mother's television preferences than could the mothers predict the children's preferences. Within mother-child pairs, 24 children could better predict what their mothers would prefer to watch. These data seem to be interpretable in light of the McLeod, et. al. (1966) and Atwanko (1970) findings. McLeod, et. al. note that pluralistic families are more likely to be "above average in education," are more urbane in their outlook and are more likely to be from upper or upper-middle classes. In the McLeod, et. al. study, 71% of the pluralistic families studied were from the upper or upper-middle class and 81% of the fathers from these families had more education than a high school degree. In his study, Abel notes that "one of the inherent problems of the sample used was the obvious polarization of the subjects to the 'high' end of the socio-economic and educational scale." Ninety percent of the fathers and 75% of the mothers in Abel's sample had some college education or more. Almost 75% of the main family wage earners were grouped in the "high" occupational prestige category, which Abel used as an index of socio-economic status. It seems reasonable to assume that Abel's finding that the children in his sample could more likely predict preferences of their mothers than vice versa is an artifact of the sample itself. Abel's finding suggests that possibly most of the children in his sample were from pluralistic homes. Therefore, it is possible to formulate the following hypothesis:

H4: There will be a higher correlation between the child's perception of what his mother would prefer to watch and his mother's actual preferences in the high idea-oriented families than in the low idea-oriented families.

A basic assumption of the typologies employed in this research is that a parent has a considerable social influence over the child which is manifested in his selection of television programs. In some cases, this influence is not so subtle and may not even be social in nature. For example, Greenberg and Dominick (1968) found that over one-third of their sample of urban adolescents felt that their parents had "the most say-so" about the television programs the family would watch. Hess and Goldman (1962) obtained similar results from a survey of mothers of grade-school children. Blood (1961) found that the husband-father controls television viewing more, particularly in the lower socio-economic classes and conflicts over TV viewing will typically be resolved in his favor.

A subsidiary purpose of the research is to provide some additional empirical support for the McLeod, et. al. typology paradigm. It is believed that differences in co-orientation pressures will be demonstrated by differences in the amount of parent-child agreement about television programming preferences. Hypothesis one pertains to the forces of co-orientation as they relate to the child and his perception of what his parents would want him to watch. As a check against that hypothesis and as further demonstration of the interactive properties of the co-orientation pressures, the following hypothesis is offered:

H5: The correlation between what the child says are his actual TV viewing preferences and what his mother indicated should be her child's preferences will be higher in the high socio-oriented families than in the low socio-oriented families.

An exploratory, subsidiary question of the present research is: Will children be attracted to a television program similar to the general dimension (either socio or idea) in which they are being reared? Would a child, for example from a socio-oriented family, prefer to watch a television program which possessed the characteristics of that dimension?

Frenkel-Brunswick and Havel (1953) compared the ethnocentric attitudes of parents and children as determined in interviews. The correlations between parent and child ethnocentrism were all positive and ranged from .20 to .60. Bird, Monachesi and Burdick (1952) examined the same variables and obtained correlations in the high .20's between the attitudes of parents and their third, fourth and fifth grade children. One of the assumptions of the Bird, et. al. framework is that there will take place in the family a direct communication link about attitudes. That may not be the case, since social attitudes are probably formed much more subtly than Bird, et. al. suggest.

These data suggest that children are very similar to their parents in terms of ethnocentrism and that they may very likely be attracted to like-dimension families. Since in the protective family the child is encouraged to adopt the parental system of values and attitudes, the following may be hypothesized:

H_6: Children from protective families will be more attracted to a television program with a similar orientation and will select it as a program they would like to watch more than children from pluralistic families.

Method

The method utilized in the present research was a field survey of children and their mothers. The survey examined the following variables:

1. centrality, peripherality or saliency of television in the home;
2. education level of the parents (assumed to be a correlate of socio-economic status);
3. the child's television viewing preferences and the child's perception of what his parents would prefer him to watch;
4. the child's perception of his mother's TV viewing preferences and his mother's actual viewing preferences;
5. the child's preferences and what his mother believes should be her child's preferences;
6. family typology;
7. attraction of children from a family type (protective or pluralistic) to a television family of like-type.

In this section, the author will describe how these variables were operationalized, and how relationships among these indices provide data for testing the hypotheses.

The logic of the hypotheses in this research holds up only to the extent that TV viewing is considered by the family to be a salient or important topic. Topics considered irrelevant, or not considered at all, could not be expected to fall under the influence of family co-orientation pressures. The importance of television in the home operated as a control variable in the present research. This control variable was used to control out those families which did not regard television as being of considerable importance. It was thus possible to study only those families which exerted controls over child viewing, discussed television viewing with the child and watched more television.

To index the control variable the author generated several questions about television viewing in the home (e.g., "How often do you and your child talk about television programs that are watched in your family?"). These questions used four response categories ranging from 1 = "never" to 4 = "always." Other questions pertained to the amount of viewing. Since this instrument, completed by the mothers, was largely untested before the present study, the data were collected before outlining rigid criteria for controlling out the "low TV salient" families. The maximum score obtainable on the instrument is 48. The returned and usable questionnaires from the mother respondents were all scored and the scores were examined for clusters which appeared to contain meaningful categories of respondents. The results of the analysis of this instrument will be reported later.

Earlier it was noted that Abel (1970) encountered some problems in his analysis because approximately 90% of his respondents were from high socio-economic status families. Abel suggested that his high SES sample influenced his finding that children could better predict what their mothers would watch than could mothers predict child TV preferences. It also seems plausible at this point to suggest that some of the relationships hypothesized in this study may be more an artifact of SES than of family type. In short, it seemed reasonable to index this variable and control for the influences of SES in the analysis of the data.

Since the study was a field survey with little control over respondent cooperation and where it was possible for large numbers of mothers to not complete their questionnaires, the SES question had to be as non-threatening as possible. The level of educational achievement was chosen as an approximate index of socio-economic status. Ball and Bogatz (1970) in The First Year of Sesame Street: An Evaluation, suggest that level of education is relatively highly correlated with general SES. Asking educational achievement also appears to be less aversive than requesting income level or occupation. One question was constructed to index this variable: "Circle the number of parents who have attended college: 0 1 2."

The SES variable was divided into two levels: high and low. Those families in which no parents had attended college fell into the low category and those families in which one or more parents had attended college constituted the high SES category. Later, in the results section, the controls for SES will be explained

in greater detail. However, the question being asked, when controlling for SES, is: within high and low socio or concept families or within particular family types, does SES have an influence on the correlational relationship as stated in the various hypotheses?

The following relationships were assessed by a rank-order correlational technique of program types:

1. the relationship of (a) the child's television viewing preferences and (b) the child's perception of what his parents would prefer him to watch;

2. the relationship of (a) the child's perception of his mother's TV viewing preferences and (b) his mother's actual viewing preferences;

3. the relationship of (a) the child's actual TV viewing preferences and (b) what his mother believes should be her child's preferences.

The respondents, both mothers and children, were requested to rank order six program categories with specific program exemplars listed under each category. The program categories were those utilized by Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1970): 1) news, 2) westerns, 3) crime-detective, 4) adventure-drama, 5) comedy-variety, and 6) situation comedy. The six categories were listed with program titles under each category heading which represented examples of that category.

The respondents were instructed to rank the six categories on the basis of the programs listed in each category. One advantage of this method was its simplicity and economy. Also, evaluations of specific programs are not the most important consideration, but the general relationships between parent and child preferences.

Three rank order correlation coefficients (Spearman rho, see Siegel, 1956) were then computed between the three relationships. In other words, each child-mother pair had three descriptive rho correlation coefficients which served as a measure of a particular relationship.

The mother indexed the family type variable. Family type was measured utilizing the McLeod, et. al. (1966) instrument, as revised by Chaffee, et. al. (1971). "Ask the child's opinion when the family is discussing something," is an example of a concept item and, "Urge the child to give in on arguments rather than risk antagonizing others," is an example of a socio item. There are four response categories, scored one through four. Each family typology questionnaire has two scores, a concept score and a socio score. Two distributions of scores were then completed for all respondents for the socio and concept dimensions and these distributions were divided at the median. These two dichotomized distributions make up the fourfold family typology described earlier.

All of the instruments to be completed by the children were pretested in a fourth-grade classroom at the University Elementary School, Bloomington, Indiana. The children also carried home a packet of questionnaires to be completed by the mother. Following the pretest, some questions that had caused confusion for the children were reworded.

The actual research respondents included all of the fifth and sixth grade students at University Elementary School, Bloomington, Indiana and the entire fifth and sixth grade population of the New Castle Community School Corporation, New Castle, Indiana. These respondents from both cities were pooled into one sample.

The children completed their questionnaires in a classroom administration of the instruments and carried home to their mothers an envelope containing a cover letter and four questionnaires. The mothers completed the questionnaires at home and returned them to school the following day. All child and mother questionnaires were coded with a number so it was possible to match child and mother pairs.

For the children, the author read the program categories and program titles aloud to the children and then told them to pick out the one group which they liked best of all and to place a "1" on the blank alongside. This procedure was continued until all blanks were filled. The children then were told to turn to the second page of program titles, informed that they were the same, and a similar procedure followed, except that the children were told to think of what their parents would most like for them to watch.* The third ranking was identical to the first two except that the children were told to think of what they believed their mother would most like to watch.

A sub-sample, consisting of three schools, of the New Castle child respondents also completed a questionnaire dealing with preference for a television program of a similar family type as that of the child. The questionnaire relates to H_6: Children from protective families will be more attracted to a television program with a similar orientation and will select it as a program they would like to watch more than children from pluralistic families.

The author first selected four programs which could best be categorized as "family" programs. The programs were selected from TV Guide. Next, a group of five coders was given a list of statements about things that parents sometimes do with their children. These statements were generated from the family typology questionnaire used in the present study. There are nine "concept" and nine "socio" statements on the list. The coders were given one sheet with the statements and one sheet with the name of the program. All coders had seen each program on at least two or more occasions. The coders were instructed to write the numbers of the statements on the sheet containing the title, if they felt the statement applied to that "TV family." If the statement did not apply, they wrote nothing.

The number of concept and socio statements for each program was summed over all coders and the highest concept, lowest socio program and the highest socio, lowest concept programs were chosen as representative of each of the two family types. The highest socio, lowest concept program was "All in the Family" and the highest concept, lowest socio program was the "Smith Family."

The children were requested to select only one of these programs. Only those "protective" and "pluralistic" children who indicated that they watched both programs almost every week were included in the analysis of these data.

*The order of presentation of the programs and program categories was counterbalanced to avoid order effect biases.

Results

Response Rate

There were 1118 children who completed questionnaires in the classroom administrations, and 963 mothers returned their questionnaires. The number of usable matched child-mother questionnaires was 781.

Control Questionnaire

The purpose of the control questionnaire, completed by the mother, was to control out those families which did not regard television as being of high importance or significance in their home. The sole purpose, therefore, was to eliminate those families which did not regard TV as being of high significance or a medium to be controlled. The resulting sample of child-mother pairs, it was assumed, would be more interested, involved and concerned about television viewing, hence more relevant to the theoretic predictions.

The maximum score obtainable was 48 on the instrument and a minimum score was 12. The scores (N=781) ranged from a low of 17 to a high of 39, with the median and modal scores being 29 (91 questionnaires received a score of 29). The mean was 28.3. From the distribution, it appeared that the most meaningful break was at the score of 23 and below since there was a cluster of scores at that end of the distribution. A decision was made to exclude from further analysis all child-mother pairs with a control questionnaire score of 23 or below. This procedure excluded 127 (16.2%) and the resulting N of 654 (N = 781-127 = 654) constituted the child-mother pairs utilized in the remaining analyses.

Distribution of Child-Mother Pairs in Family Types

The family typology questionnaire was scored 1 through 4 and two distributions of scores (socio and concept) were tabulated. The procedure, as outlined by Chaffee, et. al. (1971), was followed in which each distribution was divided at the median. The concept score distribution ranged from a low of 13 to a high of 36; the socio score distribution ranged from 11 to 36.* The median score for the concept dimension was 28 and for the socio dimension it was 24. It was then possible to type the families, as shown in Figure 2, with relatively equal size N's in the four family type cells. In other words, questionnaires with concept scores of below 28 and socio scores below 24 were placed in the "laissez faire" cell; concept scores below 28 and socio scores above 24 placed families in the "protective" cell; concept scores above 28 and socio scores below 24 placed families in the "pluralistic" cell; and, concept and socio scores above 28 and 24 respectively categorized families into the "consensual" cell.

*There are an equal number of questions (nine) in each dimension; therefore, the minimum score obtainable is nine and the maximum is thirty-six.

	High Socio	Low Socio	
Low Concept	Protective n = 162	Laissez faire n = 164	n = 326
High Concept	Consensual n = 164	Pluralistic n = 164	n = 328
	n = 326	n = 328	N = 654

FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN FOUR FAMILY TYPES.

Correlational Viewing Relationships

Three rank-order correlation coefficients provide measures of the following relationships for each child-mother pair:

1. (a) the child's actual viewing preferences, operationalized by his ranking of the six categories of programs, and (b) his perception of what his parents would prefer him to watch;

2. (a) the child's prediction of what his mother would prefer to watch, and (b) his mother's actual viewing preferences, again both operationalized by a ranking of one through six of the six program categories;

3. (a) the child's actual viewing preferences, and (b) what his mother believes should be her child's preferences.

Since the correlation coefficients were used merely to provide descriptions of these three relationships, no statistical tests of significance were applied to them.

With the families typed and the rank-order correlation coefficients computed it is now possible to analyze the various hypotheses relating to viewing preferences and family type. Hypotheses one through five were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U Test (Siegel, 1956).

Child Viewing Preferences, Their Perception of Parental Preferences and High Socio and Low Socio-Oriented Families

Hypothesis one predicts that the rank-order correlation of television viewing preferences of children and their perception of what their parents would prefer them to watch will be higher in the high socio families than in the low socio-oriented families.

To analyze data pertaining to H_1, the protective and consensual families were pooled together to form the high socio level and the laissez faire and pluralistic were combined to form the low socio level. The rank-order correlation coefficients between (a) what the child indicated were his actual viewing preferences, and (b) his perception of what his parents would prefer him to watch were ranked from high to low (these variables were operationalized by the child's rank-ordering of the six program categories). The coefficients were listed for both the high and low socio families, assigned a rank, adjusted for tied scores, and the ranks were summed for the child-mother pairs.

The statistical analysis relevant to H_1 is presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. SUM OF THE RANKS OF THE RANK-ORDER CORRELATIONS OF TELEVISION VIEWING PREFERENCES OF CHILDREN AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF WHAT THEIR PARENTS WOULD PREFER THEM TO WATCH FOR HIGH AND LOW SOCIO-ORIENTED FAMILIES.

High Socio Orientation	Low Socio Orientation
R_1 = 114,148.00	R_2 = 100,435.50
n = 326	n = 328

N = 654
z = 2.89
p less than .01, 2-tailed

As indicated in Table 1, it is possible to reject the null hypothesis that there are no differences in the sum of the rankings of the rank-order correlation coefficients. Given the nearly equal n's, the direction of the hypothesis may be detected by examining the sums of the ranks for each level. The high socio sum of the ranks is larger, therefore, the direction is as predicted and it is statistically significant. The results of Table 1 confirm the prediction that children from high socio-oriented families, families in which a great deal of emphasis is placed on interpersonal relations, generally will have television viewing behaviors similar to what they believe their parents would prefer them to watch.

Child Viewing Preferences, Their Perception of Parental Preferences and the Four Family Types

Hypothesis two predicts that there will be a higher correlation between child viewing preferences and the child's perception of what his parents would prefer him to watch in the protective families than in the consensual families. Table 2 contains the relevant data.

TABLE 2. SUM OF THE RANKS OF THE RANK-ORDER CORRELATIONS OF TELEVISION VIEWING PREFERENCES OF CHILDREN AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF WHAT THEIR PARENTS WOULD PREFER THEM TO WATCH FOR PROTECTIVE AND CONSENSUAL FAMILIES.

Protective	Consensual
R_1 = 25,661.50	R_2 = 28,112.00
n = 162	n = 164

N = 326
z = .970
p greater than .05, 2-tailed

The null hypothesis that there is no difference in the sum of the rankings of the rank-order correlations cannot be rejected at an acceptable level of probability (at least .05). In other words, there is no demonstrable difference between children's viewing preferences and what they perceive their parents would prefer them to watch for these two family types.

Hypothesis three predicts that the rank-order correlations between the child's actual viewing preferences and the child's perception of what his parents would prefer him to watch will be higher in the laissez faire families than in the pluralistic families. Relevant data are displayed in Table 3.

TABLE 3. SUM OF THE RANKS OF THE RANK-ORDER CORRELATIONS OF TELEVISION VIEWING PREFERENCES OF CHILDREN AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF WHAT THEIR PARENTS WOULD PREFER THEM TO WATCH FOR PLURALISTIC AND LAISSEZ FAIRE FAMILIES.

Laissez Faire	Pluralistic
R_1 = 25,498.50	R_2 = 28,457.50
n = 164	n = 164

N = 328
z = 1.722
p greater than .05, 2-tailed

Again, it is impossible to reject the null hypothesis that there will be no difference in the ranks of the rank-order correlations at an acceptable level of probability. In this case also, there is no demonstrable difference between children's viewing preferences and what they perceive their parents would prefer them to watch for these family types.

Child Prediction of Mother Viewing Preferences, Actual Viewing Preferences of Mother and Family Type

Hypothesis four predicts that the rank-order correlations between the child's perception of what his mother would prefer to watch and his mother's actual TV viewing preferences will be higher in the high concept-oriented families than in the low-concept families. Relevant data for hypothesis four is displayed in Table 4.

TABLE 4. SUM OF THE RANKS OF THE RANK-ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN WHAT THE CHILD INDICATES WILL BE HIS MOTHER'S ACTUAL VIEWING PREFERENCES AND WHAT THE MOTHER INDICATES ARE HER PREFERENCES FOR THE HIGH AND LOW CONCEPT-ORIENTED FAMILIES AND THE FOUR FAMILY TYPES.

High Concept-Orientation	Low Concept-Orientation
R_1 = 100,745.50	R_2 = 113,372.50
n - 328	n = 326

N = 654
z = 2.762
p less than .01, 2-tailed

In Table 4 it is clear that the null hypothesis can be rejected with these data and that children from families with a low concept orientation are better predictors of what their mothers would prefer to watch than are children from the high concept-oriented families. In other words, upon examination of the sums of the ranks, it is evident that the data are in the opposite direction of what hypothesis four predicted.

Child Viewing Preferences, Mother Indication of Viewing Preferences for Her Child and Family Type

Hypothesis five predicts that the correlation between what the child indicates are his TV viewing preferences and what his mother indicates should be her child's preferences will be higher in the high socio-oriented families than in the low socio-oriented families. Data pertaining to H_5 is displayed in Table 5.

TABLE 5. SUM OF THE RANKS OF THE RANK-ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN WHAT THE CHILD INDICATES ARE HIS TELEVISION VIEWING PREFERENCES AND WHAT HIS MOTHER INDICATES SHOULD BE HER CHILD'S PREFERENCES FOR THE HIGH AND LOW SOCIO-ORIENTED FAMILIES.

High Socio-Orientation	Low Socio-Orientation
R_1 = 109,237.00	R_2 = 105,468.50
n = 326	n = 328

N = 654
z = 1.023
p greater than .05, 2-tailed

From Table 5, it is clear that the high socio sum of the ranks is higher than the low socio sum of the ranks; thus, the prediction of hypothesis five is in the proper direction. However, the null hypothesis that there would be no difference in these sums cannot be rejected at an acceptable level of probability. In other words, there is no statistical support for the hypothesis that a child's television viewing preferences and what his mother indicates should be her child's preferences will be more closely related in those families with a high socio orientation than in those families with a low socio orientation.

Before introducing controls for parental educational achievement, it should be pointed out that there are two statistically significant findings in the first five hypotheses: (1) as predicted, there was more similarity between child viewing preferences and what they perceived their parents would prefer them to watch in the families with a high socio orientation than in those families with a low socio orientation; and (2) contrary to the theoretic prediction, children from low concept-oriented families were better predictors of their mothers' viewing preferences than were the children from families with a high concept orientation.

Controlling for Parental Educational Achievement in Hypotheses One through Five

The analyses, controlling for parental educational achievement, follow closely the previous analyses by individual hypotheses. The question being asked when controlling for educational achievement is: within high or low socio and high and low concept families is educational achievement associated with the rank-order correlation between the various hypothesized viewing relationships? Is the ranking of the rho's merely an artifact of parental educational achievement? The resulting distribution of child-mother pairs by parental educational achievement may be seen in Table 6. High educational achievement indicates that one or more parents attended college and low educational achievement indicates neither parent attended college.

TABLE 6. DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD-MOTHER PAIRS FOR HIGH AND LOW SOCIO AND HIGH AND LOW CONCEPT FAMILIES BY LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT.

	Low Socio	High Socio	
	Laissez faire	Protective	
Low Concept	Hi Ed - 44.5% (n = 73)	Hi Ed - 22.8% (n = 37)	Hi Ed - 33.7% (n = 110)
	Lo Ed - 55.5% (n = 91)	Lo Ed - 77.2% (n = 125)	Lo Ed - 66.3% (n = 216)
	Pluralistic	Consensual	
High Concept	Hi Ed - 46.9% (n = 77)	Hi Ed - 20.5% (n = 34)	Hi Ed - 33.8% (n = 111)
	Lo Ed - 53.1% (n = 87)	Lo Ed - 79.5% (n = 130)	Lo Ed - 66.2% (n = 217)
	Hi Ed - 45.7% (n = 150)	Hi Ed - 21.7% (n = 71)	
	Lo Ed - 54.3% (n = 178)	Lo Ed - 78.3% (n = 255)	

In Table 6 it is possible to see the distribution of child-mother respondents by high and low concept (rows) and high and low socio-oriented families (columns). The percentage of Hi Ed (n = 221) versus Lo Ed (n = 433) for the entire research sample is: Hi Ed, 33.8%; Lo Ed, 66.2%.

The author also computed a chi square analysis on Table 6. The results of that analysis are: (a) high and low socio by high and low educational achievement (X^2 = 41.9, df = 1, p less than .001); and (b) high and low concept by high and low educational achievement (X^2 = .0007, df = 1). It can be concluded from these data that parental educational achievement was associated with high and low socio-oriented families but not with high and low concept-oriented families.

In additional analyses, utilizing level of parental educational achievement as a control variable, it was determined that levels of educational achievement were not associated with any of the viewing relationships hypothesized. In other words, within the high and low levels of socio-orientation, high and low levels of concept-orientation and within individual family types, parental educational achievement does not influence the sums of the ranks of the hypothesized correlational viewing relationships (p greater than .05, 2-tailed in all analyses).

Child Attraction to High Socio and High Concept-Oriented Television Programs

The research question being asked in this section is: Will children be attracted to a television program similar to the general dimension (either socio or concept) in which they are being reared? Would a child, for example, from a socio-oriented family prefer to watch a television program which featured socio-oriented characteristics?

The procedure for selecting the programs was described earlier, but briefly it involved coders who matched items from the family typology questionnaire to the television programs. The highest socio-lowest concept program ("All in the Family") and the lowest socio-highest concept program ("Smith Family") were selected for testing hypothesis six. Hypothesis six states that children from protective (high socio-low concept) families will be more attracted to a television program with a similar orientation and will select it as a program they would like to watch more than children from pluralistic (high concept-low socio) families.

To operationalize this question a separate questionnaire was administered to a sub-sample of the New Castle child respondents. The children from protective and pluralistic homes were utilized in the analysis of these data. The children first indicated whether they watched the two programs on a regular basis and then they were "forced" to choose one of the two programs as one they would most prefer to watch. In all, 330 children in the sub-sample completed the questionnaire. Ninety-eight of these respondents were controlled out by the mother's control questionnaire, which left 232 in the sub-group. Sixteen questionnaires were discarded because the children did not watch the two programs on a regular basis. The author then selected only the child questionnaires from the protective and pluralistic families from the 216 usable questionnaires. The resulting N for the sub-group analysis was 97.

The results of this analysis are displayed in Table 7, which is a simple chi-square table of frequencies from each type which selected one program or the other.

TABLE 7. CHILDREN FROM PROTECTIVE AND PLURALISTIC FAMILIES WHO SELECTED THE HIGH SOCIO-LOW CONCEPT OR HIGH CONCEPT-LOW SOCIO TELEVISION PROGRAM.

	High Socio-Low Concept (Protective)	High Concept-Low Socio (Pluralistic)	
"All in the Family" - S	40	15	55
"Smith Family" - C	13	29	42
	53	44	97

$N_2 = 97$
$X = 16.76$
df = 1
p less than .001

The "S" and "C" beside the titles of the programs denote the socio or concept orientation of the program. The chi-square analysis revealed that it was possible to reject the null hypothesis at the .001 level of probability. In other words, there does seem to be an association between children who are from these two family types and their attraction to a television program with a similar family orientation.

Conclusions

These are the major results of the present research:

1. It was determined that children (10-12 years of age) from families with a high socio-orientation (protective and consensual) were more likely to have viewing preferences similar to what they think their parents would prefer them to watch than were children from the low socio-oriented (pluralistic and laissez faire) families. This finding is consistent with the theory as outlined earlier, that these children, not wanting to disturb the interpersonal climate, will conform to perceived parental preferences. In sub-group analyses (protective vs. consensual and laissez faire vs. pluralistic), no significant relationships were found for this variable (perceived similarity of program preferences).

2. It was predicted that child viewing preferences and mothers' indication of what their children should watch would be more highly correlated in the high socio-oriented families than in the low socio-oriented families. The data did not statistically support the prediction, however the data were in the proper direction.

3. The ability of a child to predict his mother's preferences was found to be higher for those children in the low concept-oriented families than for those children in the high concept-oriented families. This finding was contrary to the theoretic prediction.

4. It was determined that parental educational achievement level was significantly associated with the high and low levels of socio-orientation, but not with high and low levels of concept-orientation. The high socio groups contained a disproportionately large number of low educational achievement families.

5. When parental educational achievement was utilized as a control variable it was found that levels of educational achievement were not associated with any of the viewing relationships hypothesized.

6. An analysis of data was performed to determine if children from "extreme" family types (i.e., protective and pluralistic) would be attracted to a television program with a similar orientation. The results of that analysis indicate, in a forced-choice situation, that children from the protective (high socio-low concept) families preferred to watch a television program with a high socio-low concept orientation. In the same manner, the children from the pluralistic families (high concept-low socio) preferred to watch a TV program with the same kind of orientation.

In summary, the results of the present study indicate that the dependent variable measures achieved greater differentiation between high/low socio and high/low concept orientation than when these analyses were directed at the composite four-fold family typology. If the child is from a family with a high socio orientation his program preferences will be closely tied to what he thinks his parents want him to watch. These children are restricted in their viewing by parental interpersonal or social influence. If a child is from a low concept-oriented family he will have greater ability to predict his mother's viewing preferences. This finding was not in the hypothesized direction. No differences were found among the four family types on any of the dependent variable viewing relationships.

Discussion

The major results of the present study succeeded in providing partial support for the predictions based on the two fundamental dimensions of the family typology theory. Predictions based on the four-fold typology fared less well. It is possible to find support for the conclusion that television viewing preferences of children are affected more in certain types of families than in others, particularly in those families where there is a greater emphasis on socio or interpersonal relations. Those children, from the high socio-oriented families, have less latitude in the selection of programs. The theory suggests that these children are more closely tied to what they believe their parents would prefer them to watch. In terms of the similarities between the family typology scheme and Kelman's compliance-identification-internalization paradigm, it would be concluded that the high socio children are operating under compliance. The high socio-oriented families were also characterized by a preponderance of low educational achievement members. However, attempts to demonstrate high-low parental educational achievement effects within high socio or low socio levels were unsuccessful.

Generally the data in this study are more easily understood by comparing the high vs. low socio-oriented families than by comparing the individual family types. Most of the theoretic predictions were made on the basis of differences among the four family types. However, the bulk of the data present little evidence, either positive or negative, that the four-fold typology is not useful in determining viewing preferences of children and mothers. Some encouragement is offered by hypothesis six where differences were found between the children from the protective and pluralistic families in their preferences for TV programs with a similar orientation. However, it should be noted here that the nature of the dependent variable in hypothesis six is considerably different from the dependent variable utilized in the other hypotheses in this study.

One implication or suggestion by the author for future research is the continued investigation of matching family or personality types to individual program types. The present research barely scratched the surface of this problem and obtained significant results--that children from high socio, low concept and high concept, low socio would prefer programs of similar orientation. These data are only preliminary and rather crudely indexed, but it may suggest that the ability to design programs aimed at family or personality types is a feasible consideration.

There is at least one limitation to the family typology scheme utilized in the present study which the author believes should be noted here, but which is conjecture on his part. Some of the statements in the family typology instrument seem to be somewhat negative in nature. By negative it is meant that they seem less socially desirable or acceptable than some other statements. This seems to be especially true of those statements utilized to index the socio dimension. It may be, for example, that these statements are in fact responsible for placing certain families into different types on the basis of educational achievement of the parents rather than on family type. The data in the present study are consistent with such speculation. It was determined that educational achievement of the parents was highly associated with the high and low concept-oriented families equally. Some of the socio statements, to the highly educated person, may not seem to be a socially acceptable way of rearing a child and he may shy away from those statements. On the other hand, the concept statements may appear to be more acceptable to the prevailing social climate and the parent feels these are what the "good" parent should do. In any event, if this suspicion is correct, it might be helpful in future research to subject the family typology statements to some social acceptability scale or index before putting it to use.

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